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INTERchange
MDT Employee Newsletter
June 1992

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Banner Year For Road Work

Montanans are looking at another banner year for highway construction, according to Steve Kologi, MDT's Deputy Director of Planning and Programming.

The estimated $155 million in federal funds is $27 million more than in 1991 and $44 million more than the average of the past five years, he said. State matching funds and money from the state reconstruction trust fund bring the total highway construction package for 1992 to $192 million.

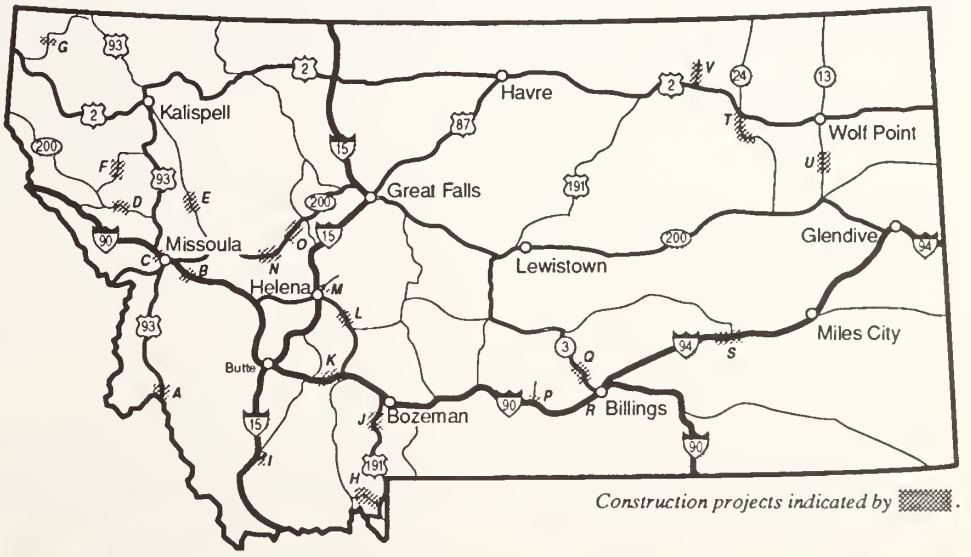
Even though the state received more federal dollars this year, he said, Montana's matching share is less due to revisions in the 1991 Transportation Bill. The new bill also gives part of the federal highway dollars to air quality and aesthetic improvement projects. Consequently, the actual increase in total dollars for 1992 highway construction projects is about $19 million, which is what it takes to build 25-30 miles of roadway, Kologi said.

The Montana Contractors Association estimates that every dollar spent on highway construction generates $1.91 more in additional spending for materials, meals and motels for workers, signs, reseeding and related projects.

It also estimates that every $1 million spent on highway construction creates 35.4 jobs.

Despite the infusion of federal money, the 1993 Legislature will probably have to raise Montana's gasoline tax, according to Director John Rothwell. He estimated an increase of two to six cents per gallon. Currently, the state tax is 20 cents and the federal tax is an additional 14 cents. Each penny of tax, he said, raises about $5 million a year, with about $3.5 million available for highway construction and $1.5 million used by other state agencies.

The last increase in the state gasoline tax was three cents in 1987, which made it one of the highest in the nation. Today, he said, Montana ranks about in the middle of the 50 states.



Locations of new projects planned for this summer or fall.

Director's Column

Last month in this column I talked about the department's public "image" and the important role we all share in representing the department in a positive way.

As this edition of the *Interchange* was going to print, those of us on the steering committee for the department's strategic plan saw for the first time the results of the survey many of you responded to, and I admit I was disappointed. There's good news as well, but employee pride and satisfaction on the job is quite low and I expect improvements will be a major challenge for all of us.

The good news is that nearly every employee who responded said they're willing to do their part, to do what it takes to make our organization better. And that's what it will take. Likewise, many of you feel there are substantial opportunities to make the organization work better and more efficiently—the kind of thing that's becoming increasingly important in these times.

The strategic plan process is progressing and we're making a list of "key issues" based on the surveys you, your co-workers, our customers and the general public completed. The results were characterized by the experts as "very accurate information–tremendously good information to work with," so we're off to a good start. The level of participation and frankness we received is encouraging.

And I'm committed to making this program work. I know we'll be judged by our actions, not words, and I have no problem with that. The key issues we identify are being listed knowing full well they're things we have to act on. I have no intention of producing a strategic plan that does nothing more than collect dust on a shelf.

By the end of June, we'll formulate a department-wide mission and strategic goals that'll be shared with every one of you. Copies are now being made of the complete results of the survey–a huge amount of data. These copies will be placed in all the field offices and at various locations at headquarters so that anyone who wants to see one can. In addition, we'll be providing a summary that attempts to sort out the issues in a meaningful way.

So there's much more to come on the issue of the survey and the strategic planning process. There are some surprises in the data, as well as confirmations of things we already knew.

It's a tough assignment we're taking on. I look forward to discussing this with you in more detail as we move ahead and continue the important work that lies ahead.

MDT Volunteer Makes a Difference

Why in the world would a grown man don fire-resistant clothing and run into a burning building?

Big bucks? Nope. This job is strictly voluntary.

Insanity? Fire Captain Ben Juvan says craziness helps, but it isn't a requirement to be a member of the East Valley Volunteer Fire Department.

Juvan, an MDT employee of 18 years, says fire fighting is a "relaxing contrast" to his work in the engineering management unit.

"What I do as a volunteer fire fighter is purely panic management," he said. " I routinely make decisions in a split second that can be life-threatening to me or my crew. With 80% of the fires, when the job's done I can see the results and be home in 40 minutes."

Not so with his work at MDT. His job never reaches the life-threatening intensity of fire fighting, and projects he oversees can take up to 10 years to complete.

Juvan admits that he likes the excitement of fire fighting, but after 12 years, there's more to it than glory. "Firefighting is an amazing education," he said.

According to Juvan, every volunteer fire fighter must complete 30 hours of training each year, with most receiving between 45 and 90 hours.

"We get classes from the Fire Services Training School in Great Falls, the Department of State Lands, Montana Rail Link, ASARCO, Conoco, Cenex, the sheriff's department and the city and county departments," he said. "And most of the time it's free." Finances are a concern for most volunteer fire departments, Juvan said, but "after you've been there for awhile, you feel like there's an obligation to provide services, even if you don't get funding."

All of the fire fighters for the East Valley Fire Department volunteer their time, Juvan said. Funding for equipment, which can cost up to $180,000 per fire engine, comes from county taxes and leasing fire equipment to state and federal agencies during emergencies. The East Valley department also holds bake sales, dances and raffles to help fill the coffers, Juvan said.

Not only does Juvan volunteer his time to fight fires, he also teaches bow hunting classes every spring and has done so for the past 15 years. Juvan worked as a Boy and Girl Scout leader for five years and is currently a merit badge counselor for archery, canoeing and computers.

So, why does a grown man don fire-resistant clothing and run into a burning building? What drives someone to keep giving quality time and attention to worthy causes?

Juvan summed it up—"I really like helping people and I've made a lot of friends with the volunteer work I do. Everybody helps everybody else—that's the best pay you can get."

Let us know about the volunteers in your area.—Editor

Deferred Compensation: Taxes at Work

Most of us will not win the lotto or have a rich relative leave us great sums of money for retirement. So what we do with what we are earning now will determine what we will have at retirement.

Congress and the state legislature established the Deferred Compensation Program, for state and public employees, with the tax deferral as incentive to save. This saving plan allows you to use your payroll taxes along with your wages to invest for your retirement.

The following example compares a regular savings account deduction with a deferred compensation account deduction. The example assumes a 15% federal income tax bracket, a 6.1% state income tax bracket and a deferral of $100 per pay check, after taxes, 24 times a year (no regular derferrals from the two, free pay periods).

Example

(Married and 0 exemptions)

Savings Account		Deferred Compensation
$780.00	Gross Pay	$780.00
00.00	Deferred Compensation	-126.74
-50.05	State Retirement	-50.05
720.95	Adjusted Gross Pay	603.21
-74.81	Federal Taxes	-55.83
-30.42	State Taxes	-22.69
-11.31	Medicare	-11.31
-48.36	Social Security	-48.36
$565.02	Subtotal	$465.02
-100.00	After Tax Passbook Savings	0.00
$465.02	Net Take-home Pay	$465.02

As the example illustrates: Contributing to deferred compensation before federal and state income taxes saves you $126.74 per paycheck. Saving $100 per paycheck after taxes in a savings account lets you take home the same net pay.

Instead of saving only $2,400 per year in the savings account, you will be saving $3,041.76 per year with deferred compensation. After five years (assuming an 8% annual interest rate) you would have accumulated $14,036 in the savings account and $18,546 in the deferred compensation account.

With the deferred compensation account, you postpone federal and state taxes until you withdraw. In the savings account, your contributions and earnings are subject to current federal and state income taxes.

The example illustrates how you can use this program to put your taxes to work for you. You can participate in the program for as little as $10 per month, and up to 25% of your taxable annual income up to $7,500 per year.

Deferred compensation is available to all state employees. The State Personnel Division contracted with D.A. Davidson and Company, DAD Benefits Plans Division of Helena, to coordinate the enrollment and marketing of the program.

Should you have any questions regarding the State Deferred Compensation Plan Benefit Program, John Allen, Jim Turcotte or Merrilee Coleman will be happy to answer them for you. Helena area residents call 442-9882. Outside the Helena area, call toll free 1-800-823-9323.

John Allen, D.A. Davidson

Happenings at MDT

Service Awards

Service awards were presented in the following categories:

35 years

Victor R. Scheuffele.

25 years

Molly A. Hardy, Marvin H. Henderson, Keith M. Roane.

20 years

Dennis R. Cline, Dale W. Sirucek, Lonny F. White.

15 years

Richard L. Allen, Tomas L. Brownlow, Robert D. French, Kenneth T. Gilreath, Jr., Martin H. Martin, Patrick J. Ott, Edward J. Shea, Patrick A. Wall, Nels L. Wilkins, Carina M. Zook.

10 years

Joseph J. Church, Robert J. Maphies, Duane Olson.

5 years

Jeffrey S. Mjelstad, Carole A. Olson, William T. Spencer.

Retirements

Rex A. Chamberlin, Great Falls, Design Tech II, 7 years, 6 months.

National Transportation Road Race Results

The annual National Transportation Week Road Race Challenge was held May 20 with Tim Cail winning the 10-k event for the seventh time.

MDT employees get the opportunity through the one-mile, 5-k and 10-k events to compete against finish times of employees from other states.

Cail's winning time was 36 minutes and 59 seconds. He was followed by David Clark-Snustad and Ken Neumiller.

The top three women finishers in the 10-k event were Mary Aafedt, Jean Bond and Dana Chapman.

In the 5-k race, Mike Bousliman led the pack, followed by Gordon McGaw and Rex Hoy. Theresa Cash was the first woman across the 5-k line followed by Patti Glick and Sheila Williams.

Jama Martin, 13, won the one-mile walk/run in 7 minutes 13 seconds. She was followed by Brie and Jim Mullins. Other top male finishers in the walk/run included Jim Erickson with a time of 10 minutes and 19 seconds, and the Right-of-Way Guys (John Horton, Milton Lentz, Dick Henderson and Bob Scherting).

Kris Wahl was the first woman to finish the one-mile event with Lynn Zanto second and Dorothy Cail third.

The 30/40 Team, consisting of Tim Cail, Denis Burke and Jack Foster, had the best team time in the 10-k event.

In the 5-k run, the Penny Pinchers had the fastest composite time. Members were Monte Brown, Brent Doig, Carol Bondy, Traci Steen and Leah Chamberlin.

Family Affair, with members Dawn Wahl, Scott Wahl and Kris Wahl, and Unknown, consising of Jim Mullins, Brie Mullins, Maria Mullins and Lynn Hinch, tied team times in the one-mile walk/run.

Tim Cail crosses the finish line with the best time in the 10-k event (upper left).

(Left to right) Theresa Cash receives a ribbon from race assistant Kris Wahl and Deputy Director George Walker (upper right).

Of all participants, Brie Mullins finishes second in the one-mile walk/run, followed by her dad, Jim.

MDT Logo Sign Program Shows the Way

Business signs designed to help travelers find services along Montana's interstate highway system are popping up throughout the state

The large 12- by 13-foot signs placed along the interstate highway are designed to direct travelers to gas, food, lodging and camping facilities located near the exits.

The signs have space for up to six gas stations and four advertisers under each of three other categories—lodging, food and camping, according to Rich Munger, MDT Logo Signs Coordinator. The first of the signs went up May 4 at the Lockwood Interchange in Billings on Interstate 90.

Munger said the advertisers pay the contractor $89 a month for each sign. Logo Signs of America, through its subsidiary, Montana Motorist Information Sign Group in Butte, is the contractor. Mike Schad, a representative of Logo, said that before July 1, about 250 of the signs will be up across Montana. When the program matures, he expects between 500 and 550 signs.

Advertisers who want to appear on the sign must meet levels of service defined in federal and state regulations, according to Gregory Smith, of the Billings office of Montana Motorists Information.

Workers from Omo Construction install the first sign of the MDT Logo Sign Program. The sign was installed on I 90 near the Lockwood Interchange in Billings.

For instance, gas stations that want to advertise must be open seven days each week for at least 16 hours each day.

The idea is to make traveling easier for the public. Right now, the program is concentrating on the interstate system, but Montana Motorist Information is also preparing a sign program for primary highways. The signs will be smaller, and the requirements will be less restrictive to include a variety of tourist-industry business, such as ski areas, antique shops and water slides. Rent on the signs will also be cheaper, Munger said.

Mail Call

Lima Snowplow Driver Commended

Returning from the Rodeo Finals in Las Vegas this past December, we stopped in Salt Lake. Upon leaving, I discovered that my wallet was missing from my purse. The authorities were notified. During our trip home, I gave up all hope of recovering any of the personal items in my wallet, much less the $350 cash.

In January of this year, I received a phone call from a snowplow operator in Lima, Montana, named Roy Roden. He stated that he had been plowing snow and had found my driver's license, family photos and other miscellaneous items and would mail them to me. He inquired if other items were missing in addition to what he had found. I told him what else was missing, and he stated that he would try to keep an eye out for them while plowing, but promised nothing.

I thanked him for his kindness, wrote him a thank-you note and once again resigned myself to the misery associated with lost money, notifying credit card companies, etc.

On April 16, I received another envelope which contained more personal pictures, my conservation license and $171 cash. This envelope was postmarked Lima and came unannounced. It took me totally by surprise and left me that way also. It was from Roden.

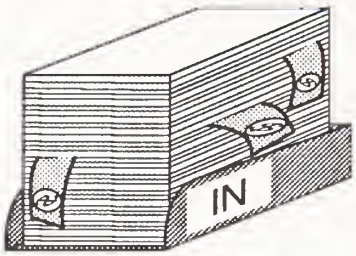
In today's world, all one has to do is pick up the newspaper to see just what rotten things are being done by rotten people to innocent people.

Roden needs more recognition than the heartfelt thanks which I have given him. He is truly a person to be commended for his unselfishness and his willingness to help others. It's a shame that we cannot read or hear of more Roy Rodens in this world than the other way around.

Cheri French
Roberts, MT

We'd like copies of *your* fan mail to publish in the *Interchange*.—Editor

Hidden Costs of Paperwork



Many offices have begun, or are well underway, on their records management projects—converting and purging files. Maybe these figures will cause you to think twice before writing superfluous memos and letters:

- For every dollar spent to print forms, $20 to $80 is spent to process, copy, distribute, store and destroy them.
- White-collar workers spend 21% to 70% of all their working hours on paperwork, and a total of 18,000 pages (a four-drawer file cabinet) are maintained for each white-collar worker.
- Companies spend $35,000 to print and process the forms in each four-drawer file cabinet and $2,160 annually to maintain each cabinet.
- Survey respondents estimated that routine documents are rewritten 4.2 times within the organization before they reach their intended audience. A memo rewritten 4.2 times by a typical employee costs $75.82. If he or she writes only one memo a week, those messages cost the company $3,942.64 a year.

—*The Personnel Journal*, December 1987

Food For Thought

Americans spend an average of three years of their lives attending business meetings, eight years opening junk mail, and two years playing phone tag.

—Fortino Associates

Manager's Corner

To move a key employee out of a rut, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do they have enough to do? Try giving them more challenges.
- Do they have too much to do? If they are too burdened, they may just give up.
- Are they in the right slot? Poor performance may be due to frustration.
- Is your door really open? Can they get advice, assistance and authority from you?
- Are they being over managed? Do they have freedom to make decisions?

Down for the Count?

Reduce the chance of tripping or falling by:

- Wiping up spills.
- Keeping walkways clear.
- Watching where you are going.
- Wearing the proper shoes.
- Turning on lights.
- Using handrails.
- Looking at your floors—fixing tiles and carpet that may cause you to trip.
- Installing no-slip strips in areas that are often wet or slippery.

Some Tips on Motivation

Use different approaches to motivate different types of people.

Practical, orderly employees respond best to fair treatment and job security.

Innovative, risk-taking employees are motivated by constant challenge and frequent recognition.

Talkative, people-oriented workers are spurred by personal warmth and a listening ear.

—*The Roadrunner*, May 1992

More Food For Thought

You're on the road to success if you can put your best foot forward without stepping on anyone's toes.

More Helpful Health Hints:

Beware of labels—just because something is low in cholesterol does not mean it is low in fat. Remember—labels can be deceiving. Look for the fat content in grams per serving.

Fat in grams x 9 = **Fat Calories**

Each gram of fat has nine calories. You want to keep your fat calories *below 30%* of your total calorie intake

Red Cross Blood Drawing

There will be a state blood drawing in Helena on Monday, June 29 from 10:00 am to 3:30 pm. The drawing will be in the basement of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Building. If you would like to donate, please call 6054 before June 25th.

Stand Tall

Do you pace when you have a big decision to make? Actually, getting up and walking around is the best thing you can do. Researchers at the University of Southern California have discovered that standing enables you to process information five to 20 percent faster than you can when you're sitting down. Standing makes your heart beat faster and activates your central nervous system, which in turn causes you to be more alert. So, the next time you have some heavy thinking to do, stand tall.

Even More Food For Thought

Doing your best is more important than being the best.

Do You Really Know What's Back There?

Perhaps the most preventable and inexcusable accident is caused by backing into a parked auto or a fixed object. You should never be guilty of this type of error as a professional driver.

Check Around Before You Enter Your Vehicle—Investigate all around the outside of your vehicle for possible hazards that cannot be seen from the driver's seat. This includes improperly parked vehicles next to yours, children and toys in driveways, and low objects such as hydrants, posts, abutments, delineators, and fences. This *investigation precaution* is a good investment of *only a second or two of your time*.

In the driver's seat, keep your foot on the brake as you shift into reverse. Then, before starting to back, check traffic on both sides as well as the rear. Make sure nothing is hidden by "blind spots." Don't rely on your mirrors! Get help to guide you if you can't avoid "blind spots."

Know When and Where to Back—Driving in reverse normally should cover the shortest span possible from inches to feet, not half a block. It should be a means of reaching a spot that will enable you to move forward quickly into the flow of traffic. Never back down a street looking for a missed address or exit. And, never back uphill or across lanes of traffic. It's always wiser to drive around the block than to risk a conflict with oncoming traffic.

Be Sure You're Seen—When backing move slowly—sound your horn before proceeding if there is any doubt that other traffic can see you.

Avoid Backing—You can't always avoid backing, but if you can it may prevent an accident.

—Texas DOT

EAP's New Service

Long-term illness or injuries are stressful. But help is on the way through a service of our new Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Here's how the service works: Starting with the June 13 pay period, if you're off work due to illness or injury for 40 or more hours in a pay period, an EAP counselor will call you or send a note to see how you're doing.

We encourage you to use this program. There's no charge for services provided by the EAP staff.

Your supervisor may remind you that the EAP will call, but no one will know whether you use it or not. Don't wait—if you need help or information, give the EAP a call in your district or call 443-1127 in Helena. If you need more information contact Theresa Cash in Helena at 444-6054.

This service is completely confidential. The EAP can help with adjustment to illness or injury, financial, physical, mental, health, stress and other issues.

Here's to your health....

Computer Operator Tips

1. Choose names for your files that mean something to you. The names should suggest what's in the files so it's easier to retrieve them a month from now.
2. Use letters or numbers as extensions to help name file series (example: bills.1, bills.2, etc.).
3. Be sure to perform the save function frequently as you type.
4. Use macros for frequently repeated commands.
5. Use shells for letters and memos.
6. Think before you punch the keys. The computer does what you tell it to do, not what you want it to do. Do you really want to delete that file or print that 100-page document?

Employee's Corner

Getting bad news to the boss:

- Remember the sooner you get the news to the boss, the better.
- If possible, deliver the news in person.
- Don't blame others if it is your fault.
- Don't go ahead with a key decision without the boss' approval.
- After the problem is resolved, detail what was done so the problem can be avoided next time.

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Great Falls District *by Nancy Ostle*

Clerks Honored

In the Havre area, Cynthia Kafka, part-time, Administrative Clerk I (left in photo) and Edith Weaver, Administrative Clerk III (right) were honored on Secretaries Day, April 22.

The two "held down the fort" from Oct 1991 through May 1992 during the absence of the Administrative Clerk IV. Edith has now been promoted to Administrative Clerk IV.

Promotions and Transfers

Deanna Summerhays, promoted to Engineering Tech II, Great Falls.

Edith Weaver, promoted to Administrative Assistant IV, Havre.

Christina Bunton, transferred to Administrative Clerk III, Havre.

Thomas DesRosier, promoted to Field Supervisor A, Big Sandy.

Missoula District *by Martha Vogt*

New Building

With an increase in Right-of-Way staff, the Missoula District purchased a used, double-wide trailer for additional office space.

Now located in the parking lot just north of the main building, the Right-of-Way office is large enough for the agents, and has a separate area for use as a conference room. Bathrooms, phones, computer cables and a FAX have made it a working environment.

Welcome to Joe Freeman, Dick Reilly and Gary Bullock, recent transfers from Helena.

Retirements

Delmar Lemons, who retired as Maintenance Superintendent in March, will be busy building a new home in the Seeley Lake community. He and his wife are doing most of the work on the home and living in a travel trailer until it's finished.

About 90 people wished Delmar a happy retirement at a barbecue luncheon on March 19.

Michael Freidrich, Maintenance Superintendent, will retire at the end of July. Mike has already sold his home in Evaro and is scouting out all areas in the Northwest for a new home after retirement. He's had 22 years with the department.

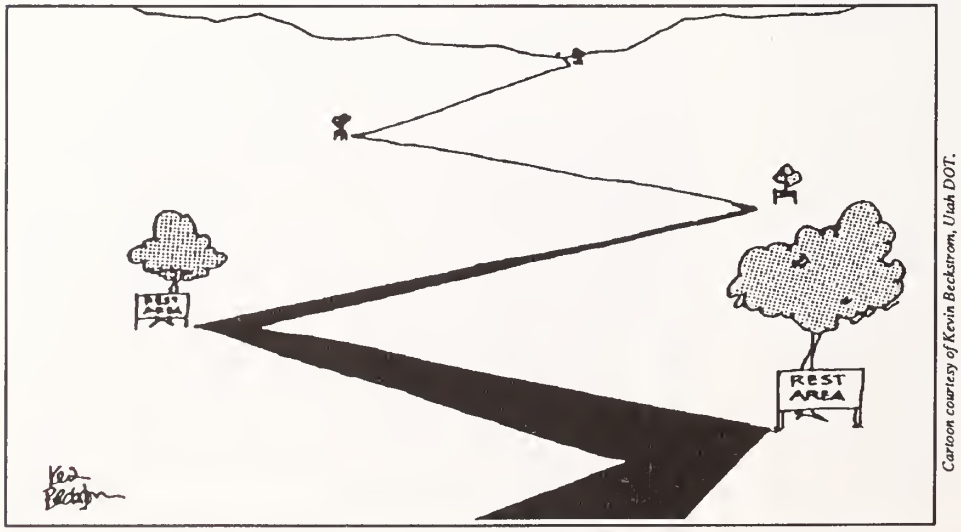
Gene Piedalue, Field Project Manager in the Kalispell area is retiring May 15 after 32 years of service. However, he won't be relaxing; he begins work at Schellinger Construction the Monday after he retires.

Promotions

Bert Johnson was promoted to Field Maintenance Supervisor in Bigfork.

Danny Butts was promoted to Field Maintenance Supervisor in Olney.

Jacey Cline, in the Kalispell area office, was promoted to Accounting Clerk III.



Cartoon courtesy of Kevin Beckstrom, Utah DOT.

Why dogs don't build freeways

INTERchange
Employee Newsletter

The employee newsletter is published by the Public Affairs Bureau, Montana Department of Transportation:

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